

To Planning Commission and City Staff,

I am writing you to express some of my concerns with the site plan proposed by Morningside Development called "1140 Broadway" and its request for a zoning change. This letter should not be considered a rebuke against development or against higher density construction. I strongly support the development of more dense housing to promote a more walkable/cyclable city and more social environments. Rather it is meant to express specific concerns with the existing proposal. Broadly my concerns fall into 4 categories: zoning, massing, use of the space, and affordability.

The proposed zoning change to C1AR does not appear to conform to the city's Master Plan. Moreover, the C1AR zoning that is requested is worrisome, as it is unprecedented in the city for a development to request this designation. From my understanding there may be an aversion to PUD zoning based on past bad experiences. However, that does not mean that moving to a different type of zoning will resolve these issues. C1AR has very few restrictions and currently only minimal use in the city (I am only seeing it used at the corner of State and Packard on the zoning map). The use of C1AR in at 1140 Broadway could serve as a precedent for the Lowertown area and perhaps others in the city. For better or worse, the University of Michigan owns significant property in the city. Therefore there are many areas of town that most residents would not consider to be 'campus' but may technically qualify as such. Regardless of anyone's particular view of this 1140 project, the use of this very un-restrictive zoning more broadly through the city is not a desirable outcome. Therefore I request that the zoning change to C1A/R be denied.

The Master Plan states that "The height of new residential buildings near Traver Creek should not exceed 4 stories in height." It goes on to say that "most new buildings in the remaining portion...should be between 3 and 5 stories in height" and that taller buildings (as tall as 8 stories) be slender instead of massive. Some of this may be considered out of date, or in need of updating, because the city was not facing the current housing boom/issues back when this section was drafted. However, the intention of this would not be out of date.

The current design places the majority of the massing closest to the neighborhood rather than towards Maiden Lane. Further, the vast majority of the complex will be 7 stories except small sections where it steps down to 5 near the neighborhood. The condos in building B, on Maiden Lane, will also drop to only 6 stories, which will be across the street from the Kellogg Eye Center.

Looking at the intent of these parts of the Master Plan, and the current situation, it may be reasonable to assume that taller buildings could exceed 8 stories if they are away from the neighborhoods. This would serve as a nice balance and transition from the Kellogg Eye Center (and whatever future tall buildings UofM will presumably build). This could more than compensate for a reduction in height near the neighborhood, while providing a better transition from single family residential to high density. Additionally it would have the benefit of moving the perceived massing of the buildings (if not the actual massing) away from the neighborhood.

The Master Plan also calls for a mixed-use development. Morningside's proposal has minimal retail (4,400 square feet), but they have stated that it could be potentially doubled if there was sufficient demand. My concern with this is 2 fold. 1) I agree with Morningside that a traditional retail (e.g. books, clothing, or grocery) would have a very hard time surviving in this space. However, if you go into any restaurant on the North side of town in the evening it is always packed. I believe there is more than sufficient demand to sustain greater retail space of this kind in the area. Especially with

the addition of over 600 additional people to the area. 2) I do not believe the developer has planned for sufficient parking to meet the demand of more than one business, especially if it is a restaurant. Currently all of the planned parking for the retail is spread through the development in the form of on-street parking. There is approx. 37 spaces many, of which can be expected to be taken by guests of the 600 units. Therefore the retail will be dependent upon the public parking spaces available on Broadway. Statements by Morningside that they could expand the retail space seems like they may be empty promises because they property will not sufficient capability to support parking, nor the ability to add additional parking. They have requested a variance for decreased residential parking based on their past experience. Therefore it is very unclear where additional parking would come from for additional retail.

I am also concerned about the lack of affordable housing in this development. The lack of affordable housing in Ann Arbor is well documented by the city. For a development of this proposed size to not include any affordable housing is deeply concerning. The disparity in affordability and opportunity for lower income households will only continue to get worse without an active response from both the city and developers. Dense developments such as this should benefit all classes and allow better opportunities for all.

I welcome and look forward to development on this site, but would expect closer adherence to the Master Plan, and more benefit to the city's residents. I request that the Planning Commission postpone and table the decision on this project until the developer can submit new plans that addresses the above concerns, including a new zoning proposal, better distribution of massing on the lot, a sufficient plan for how retail space may be increased in the future, and affordable housing.

Best Regards,

Cullen Leggett & Carmen Yu  
1312 Broadway St.  
Ann Arbor, Mi